292 and the inside gown is exchanged for one made of finer cotton cloth, dyed dark blue, green, or violet, and long, wide extensions are sewn on to the regular sleeves. Often two or three sets of sleeves are worn, one over the other, to give the illusion that several gowns are being worn. In order to heighten this effect, each sleeve is slightly shorter than the one under it. These outer sleeves are made of three strips of cotton cloth of different colors, such as red, green, or violet. Each of these strips is separated from the other strips by narrow bands of cotton cloth of other colors, such as yellow, dark blue, or orange. To add to this display of color on the sleeves, a woman in her best clothes may wear a red embroidered collar, a pair of dark blue trousers, boots with red legs and black feet, embroidered. Under the bright blue sky of the Monguor country, and in the dry air and sparkling sunshine that prevail most of the year, this display of colors is not harsh or crude, but gives a wonderful feeling of life and happiness, especially in a large crowd gathered at a festival. When the sky is overcast, however, the display of color appears too garish; but almost anywhere in North China with its yellow loess earth, mud houses, and dust storms, the whole world appears monotonous and depressing in bad weather.

•386 The old vegetable dyes formerly used by the Monguors have long been replaced by German aniline dyes, which is unfortunate because the colors rapidly fade in the bright sun. The colors also run when the clothes get wet, and consequently if a thunder shower breaks over a festival crowd there is bustle and confusion while the women take off their fine sleeves, the lower extensions of their trousers, their girdles, boots, and hats, wrap them in bundles, and run barefoot for shelter, wrapped only in their dark blue gowns. Women who have reached the age of about forty no longer wear the false outer sleeves, nor do they wear brilliant colors.

292 In festive dress, the Monguor woman also wears a skirt, of the pattern that used to be worn by soldiers under the empire. This skirt, which is handsomely embroidered, is of a pattern originally designed for horseback riding. It is slit both before and behind and hangs on the two sides of the body, swinging as the woman walks. The favorite color for festive dress is red, and the skirts of rich women are frequently made of embroidered satin or silk. At home, a woman usually wears a skirt of the same cut, but made of simple dark blue cotton cloth. While at home, a woman must wear either the gown or the skirt, and usually both; the members of the elder generation would never allow them to be seen dressed only in trousers and short jacket such as Chinese women wear.

The importance of the skirt as an ancient part of the costume is indicated by the fact that in former days all Monguor women, even those who during their lifetime wore Chinese costume, had at death to be dressed in a skirt to be laid in the coffin; the saying went that

[856 cont.]
782 indicates precisely to the foot the spot where the urn is to be
[791] buried; he likewise determines the depth. Usually this is one
[787] to two ells. A few cypress twigs are put on the floor of the pit. Over them the soothsayer scatters a few barley kernels with the tip of the spear, and one or more flat white stones, depending on how many urns there are, are put on the whole, and the urn is put on it. Then on top of the urn is put a flat white stone, like a lid. Finally the space between the urn and wall is stuffed all around with cypress twigs, and everything is filled with earth, stamped down, and made level. Then the men burn cypress incense and kowtow in front of the urn thus buried.
[792] The lama remains seated on his mat in front of it for some time yet and finishes his prayers. Then all go home.

Details

782 The urn: The urn is an ordinary clay vessel such as is
415 baked in Tsinghai. Usually they are of whitish-yellow color, about 20 to 30 centimeters high, with a thick belly and a narrow neck. The urn for the earth-spirit must be uncolored and unglazed, at least on the outside, and must have a flat bottom. The master of the household buys the urn himself, washes it
[386] [857] thoroughly, and paints it on the outside with gypsum or lime water, for only white urns are given to the earth-spirit. At the conclusion, it is fumigated and ready for use by the lama.

782 Contents of the urn: There are five kinds of grain in the urn, namely: blue Tibetan barley, red wheat, white barley,
824 white rice (2), and yellow rape. The spices are the same as at

2. [Foreign text p. 858.] Why white is used twice here, white barley and white rice, is unclear. Otherwise rice is never used among the five kinds of grain and is not even present in Tsinghai. Perhaps this is an indication of a southern origin of the urn.

[174]

[857 cont.]

782 [824] the incense offering, the good six. To this are added little leaves of Buddha gold, little pieces of silver, corals, little pieces of mother-of-pearl, sometimes rare stones or water, and then five-colored silk threads, white and black sugar, tea leaves, and a few little balls of butter.

The filling: First a mortar with pestle, a large earthen vessel, and a clean iron kettle are provided. All these objects are thoroughly washed and fumigated in the incense fire. The spices are pounded to flour in the mortar and then poured by the lama into the vessel, where they are thoroughly mixed with the five kinds of grain. The quantity depends on the size of the urn. Meanwhile the master of the household melts a lump of butter in the iron kettle over the fire. The lama pours this melted butter into the grain and spice mixture with a spoon and thoroughly kneads everything together.

He puts this mixture into the urn, but only one-third of it. Over this first filling he puts a layer of the other additions, gold, silver, etc. Then the remaining two-thirds are added, almost up to the rim of the urn, and the liquid butter is poured on, almost to overflowing. The master of the household brings a yellow or red hada (or cloth), fumigates it, and hands it to the lama. He ties up the urn with it in three layers, in which the colors yellow and red may alternate. The thread that is wound around the cloth must also be yellow or red and is first fumigated. Once everything is thoroughly tied up, the knot is covered with sealing wax (3) and finally stamped with a seal

[439]

3. [Foreign text p. 858.] Latsia, as the sealing wax is called, is obtainable from Chinese traders.

[778] [386] that bears Tibetan signs. Afterwards the lama paints a nuru jewel on the white urn with red pigment, usually red clay, which is to signify a treasure. This makes the urn distinguishable as a treasure for the earth-god (4).

4. [Foreign text p. 858.] The Tujen call the symbol of good